

I am a writer, a performing artist, and active in social and political community activities. I have become especially involved in issues around radio and TV consolidation in the past year.

It is clear to me, and disturbing to me, that despite the proliferation of channels, networks, and methods of delivering radio and TV programming, there is actually LESS local programming and LESS diversity of programmers, than ever before.

I actually heard one FCC panel member boast that we have over 100 cable channels, and therefore more programming choices. That member wasn't paying attention. Those 100+ channels are owned by a handful of corporations, and represent, in reality, perhaps 8 choices.

Every time a corporate owner takes a decision out of the local station management's hands, the community loses. The recent Sinclair corporation's attempt to foist a conservative political commercial onto its affiliates is the poster-child example of this kind of abuse.

In addition, every station should have the responsibility to provide local programming.

And by local programming, I don't mean advertising, promotional, or goodwill efforts undertaken by the local station managements.

I mean local news coverage; talk shows interviewing local artists, writers, and scholars; school sports; community service shows; and so on.

Voice tracking is one of the worst abuses of consolidation.

First, it is deceptive. For a pre-recorded remote announcer to pretend to be a local is shameful.

Second, it is dangerous. Voice-tracked stations have been proved unable to cover local emergencies.

Third, it hurts the economy by eliminating jobs.

I have watched nearly all of your televised or recorded hearings on C-Span. I look forward to your continuing to publicly explore issues such as payola, national music playlisting, and local programming obligations.

Thank you.